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ABSTRACT

This student guide supplements a career development unit on coping in the world of work designed to assist students in developing coping strategies to deal with work entry and job adjustment problems. (Other components of the unit--instructor's handbook, handout/transparency masters, and filmstrip/sound cassette programs, are available separately.) The problem-solving approach that involves diagnosing the problem, generating solutions, evaluating and choosing solutions, and testing the solution is used in the student exercises. Major areas for which materials are supplied are (1) career planning and training problems including educational preparation, job goals and expectations, job changes, and geographic mobility; (2) job getting problems including job seeking, interviewing and test-taking, job placement, prior work experience, job layoffs and rejections, prejudice, and communication; (3) on-the-job adjustment problems including automation and changing technology, new roles, work rules and standards, work habits, alienation, and getting along with others; and (4) off-the-job adjustment problems including family and personal situational adjustment, attitudes and values, and self-image. (TA)

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Research and Development Series 120B

STUDENT GUIDE

Coping in the World of Work:

Practice in Problem Solving

Robert E. Campbell
George A. Wynn
Robert M. Ransom

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- Developing educational programs and products
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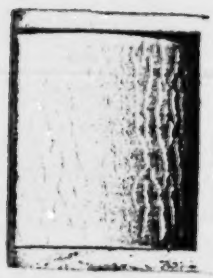
- Installing educational programs and products
- Operating information systems and services
- Conducting leadership development and training programs



WORK ENTRY AND JOB ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS (WEJAP)

Work Entry Problems are those which affect getting a job and adapting to the work situation. Job Adjustment Problems are those which interfere with the workers successful performance of the tasks on the job. The following is a summary of Work Entry and Job Adjustment Problem categories:

I. CAREER PLANNING AND TRAINING PROBLEMS

- A. Educational preparation
- B. Job goals and expectations
- C. Job changes
- D. Geographic mobility

II. JOB GETTING PROBLEMS

- A. Job seeking
- B. Interviewing and test-taking
- C. Job placement
- D. Prior work experience
- E. Job layoffs and rejections
- F. Prejudice
- G. Communication

III. ON THE JOB ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS

- A. Prejudice
- B. Communication
- C. Automation and changing technology
- D. New roles
- E. Work rules and standards
- F. Work habits
- G. Alienation
- H. Getting along with the boss and other workers

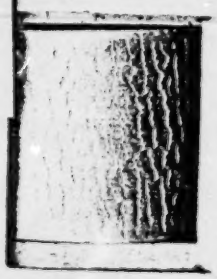
IV. OFF THE JOB ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS

- A. Family and personal situational adjustment
- B. Attitudes and values
- C. Self-image

STUDENT OUTLINE

COPING IN THE WORLD OF WORK:

PRACTICE AND PROBLEM SOLVING



STUDENT OUTLINE

COPING IN THE WORLD OF WORK:
PRACTICE IN PROBLEM SOLVING

Use the following information to solve Work Entry and Job Adjustment Problems.

STEP 1: DIAGNOSING THE PROBLEM

A. Have you detected a problem? The sooner you do this, the better because you can then distinguish between a *potential* or *fully developed* problem.

B. Can you identify the category of the work adjustment problem? This may not always be possible, but it is helpful. (See next page.)

C. Have you determined the causes and symptoms? If it produced an effect, it is called a *cause*. If there are signs of a problem, and this is one of the signs, it is called a *symptom*.

D. Have you sought sources of information (people and places) for problem identification? The sources must have *accessibility* (you are able to get to the sources) and *value* (the source has the information you want).

STEP 2: GENERATING SOLUTIONS

A. Have you listed as many solutions to the problem as possible? The more the better, since you are brainstorming here.

B. Have you determined the goals for the "best" solution? Be sure these goals are realistic.

STEP 3: EVALUATING SOLUTIONS

A. Have you found the sources of information (people and places) needed to evaluate the possible solutions? You should evaluate solutions in terms of *workability* (can you carry out the solution?) and *usefulness* (what is the degree to which your solution will solve the problem?).

STEP 4: CHOOSING THE SOLUTION

A. Have you selected your solution based upon its workability and usefulness?

STEP 5: TESTING THE SOLUTION

A. Does your solution work? Check to see if it meets your goals.

B. If your solution didn't work, *recycle* (return to the step where you believe the procedure has failed and proceed through the remaining steps of the process).

To The Students Using This Guide

The student guide you have been given was designed to supplement the instructional unit "Coping in the World of Work: Practice in Problem Solving" that you and the other students in your class have just begun. This guide is not meant to be read from cover to cover but simply used as your instructor directs. That is, your instructor will have you read a page or two at a time or follow along while he or she reads a particular section with you. You will notice that the page numbers in your guide are not numbered consecutively. That is, the first page is numbered vi, the second is number 13 and so forth. These pages all appear in their proper order in the Instructor's Handbook only. It was felt that since your instructor would need to refer you to specific page numbers, he or she would need to have them numbered exactly the way they appear in the Instructor's Handbook. In this way, we had hoped to eliminate any confusion occurring as the result of having the same pages numbered differently in your Student Guide than the way they are numbered in the Instructor's Handbook.

This unit has been designed simply and entirely with you in mind. We, the authors, realize that many of you have had some types of work experience at this point in your life. However, we also know that you will encounter a wide range of problems in getting and adjusting to a job as you leave school and enter the world of work. These problems involve such things as your educational preparation, job placement, prejudice, communication, attitudes and values, and other similar kinds of problems (see pages 13-20). What we are trying to help you with is your abilities to deal (cope) with these problems in your own way. We have provided you with a five-step problem solving approach (see page vi) that will help you deal with your problems now and in the future. This approach is really a "common sense" way of looking at problems; we have simply tried to put it in an easy-to-remember form.

The exercises you will go through in this course are meant to give you practice and experience in dealing with work entry and job adjustment problems. We would like you to learn as much as possible about these problems and how to solve them and, hopefully, have some fun while you are doing it. The games and exercises you will participate in are designed to help you learn and enjoy yourself while you are learning. Use this Student Guide and the other parts of this unit to your best ability; you are the person who will receive the most from this unit if you use it wisely. Good luck and have fun!

Robert E. Campbell
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Robert M. Ransom

OUTLINE

WORK ENTRY AND JOB ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS (WEJAP)

Work entry problems are those which affect getting a job and adapting to the work situation. Job adjustment problems are those which interfere with the worker's successful performance of the tasks on the job. The following is a summary of work entry and job adjustment problem categories:

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- D. Prior work experience
- E. Job layoffs and rejections
- F. Prejudice
- G. Communication

III. ON THE JOB ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS

- A. Prejudice
- B. Communication
- C. Automation and changing technology
- D. New roles

E. Work rules and standards

F. Work habits

G. Alineation

H. Getting along with the boss and other workers

IV. OFF THE JOB ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS

A. Family and personal situational adjustment

B. Attitudes and values

C. Self-image

WORK ENTRY AND JOB ADJUSTMENT PROBLEM (WEJAP) CATEGORIES

The following are definitions and examples of problem categories.

I. CAREER PLANNING AND TRAINING PROBLEMS

A. Educational Preparation

A comprehensive general education and training in marketable skills are necessary to get and hold a job. A weak general education might cause the worker to have more problems than necessary with elementary reading and mathematics at work. Specialized job skills training is necessary to help prepare the worker who is new to the labor market to be more efficient and effective in getting a job and more aware of the social as well as technical skills needed to hold a job.

Example: Elizabeth wants to be supervisor. She is highly skilled, but she cannot speak or write clearly, and so finds it difficult to express herself in social situations.

B. Job Goals and Job Expectations

(Anticipated Job Characteristics)

A worker has visions of ideal job conditions which he would like to find on his job. Usually, however, he expects to see less than these ideal conditions. Problems may result from job dissatisfaction if there are great discrepancies between job expectations, what the worker actually expects to find on his job, and ideal job aspirations, what he hopes to find on his job.

Example: Joyce was hired as a file clerk but has been used only as a receptionist, a position for which she is not prepared.

C. Job Changes

When a worker changes jobs, is it for a better job? Unfortunately, many workers change jobs without gaining anything. They simply move into a different job at the same level, with similar pay, and responsibilities. Although this form of horizontal mobility is sometimes attempted for personal reasons, frequently it is an example of job hopping, moving from job to job without plan or purpose. A worker may fail to move to a better job (upward vertical mobility), or even move to a worse job, because he doesn't have clear ideas of what he wants from a job or of what his job market has to offer.

Example: Fred has had three similar jobs in a year. He knows what he doesn't like about his jobs, but he's not sure what kind of job will satisfy him.

D. Geographic Mobility

If a worker cannot find employment near his place of residence or near other places he considers important (school, shopping center, recreation area), he may find commuting problems added to his problems on the job. A worker may also face difficulties when asked by an employer to transfer to an unfamiliar area. Some workers are tied to regional employment conditions and they find it hard to adapt to the employment conditions of other regions.

Example: Pat is a skilled fruit farm worker, but since he moved to the city, he has not been able to find a job.

II. JOB GETTING PROBLEMS

A. Job-Seeking

Finding a job is in itself a complex problem, involving checking out many sources of information, weighing all the advantages and disadvantages of diverse jobs, deciding on one job, and evaluating the correctness of that decision while employed on the job. If we seek employment carelessly, we probably will face our problems on the job in a similarly careless manner.

Example: Bernice wants to be a welfare worker but does not know where to apply.

B. Interviewing and Test-Taking

The interview is a major hurdle for the prospective employee. An interviewee who is unfamiliar with the techniques available to present himself most favorably, or who lacks experience with taking tests, could encounter many difficulties at this early stage of the employment process. The interview procedure has been criticized for containing biases and for being unreliable. Research has also found that the major hiring decisions are often made at the beginning of the interview and are based on a questionnaire filled out by the applicant beforehand. Nonetheless, it is in the applicant's best interest to prepare carefully for the tests and interview, and to use these to his advantage.

Example: In applying for a job, Marie was asked to take a typing test. She became very nervous and made many errors.

C. Job Placement

Typically high schools do not have placement offices and youth are left to their own initiatives. For many this is very difficult as they have had little work background and thus few leads. Some high schools are more aggressive and provide help ranging from a referral to personally introducing the applicant to his/her interviewer. Also, state

employment offices provide some screening of applicants and do direct some individuals to various training programs. The extent to which these institutions facilitate the work entry of students often determines their success or failure in finding a job.

Example: Denise went to see her high school counselor for help in finding a job for which she was well-suited. She discovered that there was no job placement service in her school and she would have to do it on her own. She was very disappointed as she had no idea where to begin to look.

D. Prior Work Experience

Is it fair to ask a new worker to be experienced? A company wants the most efficient labor force it can get. A new worker needs to get a job before he is experienced, in order to become experienced. Are the goals of the new worker and of the company incompatible, or can they be reconciled? Some occupational research has shown that new workers may not be less efficient or less capable than experienced workers. New workers may find that there are other ways to gain experience. Some of the alternative opportunities to get experience, which may be easier to get into and may offer more general experience, are cooperative organizations, work-study programs, volunteer programs, junior achievement and other youth organizations, and part-time or seasonal work. Thus, the simple but frustrating problem of which comes first, experience or getting hired, may be solvable in many ways.

Example: Margie applied for a job as a printer but was turned down since she did not have prior work experience.

E. Job Layoffs and Rejections

If job applicants receive many rejections, they may become discouraged, skeptical of hiring practices, and pessimistic about job opportunities and their own abilities. This may result in the applicant becoming more tense during interviews, which will make it even more difficult for him to get hired. Ultimately, the job applicant may become frustrated and give up seeking work, accepting unemployment instead. Job layoffs may similarly affect the worker. If he is chosen to be laid off, he may become skeptical of the company's policies regarding workers and uncertain about his own abilities as a worker.

Example: Cornelius has interviewed for twenty jobs but couldn't get any of them. He now feels a great lack of confidence in himself and fears further rejections.

F. Prejudice

Because prejudicial attitudes of one person or group toward another because of age, sex, race, religion, or handicap are pervasive in society, they can cause problems in getting a job. Discriminations in hiring are direct problems which have indirect effects on career aspirations and applicant morale.

Example: Ann applied for a job as a forklift operator. Even though she scored high enough on the mechanical skills examination to begin on-the-job training, the supervisor, Mr. Sands, would not hire her. He told her that he would not hire a woman for a "man's job."

G. Communication

A worker must be able to make inquiries about job positions and express himself intelligently during a personal interview. If the worker is not able to handle these types of communication, he may also be unable to get the job he wants.

Example: Roger could not discuss his reasons for wanting the sales position. This made the personnel clerk question his ability to be an aggressive salesman. She noted this on his interview sheet and subsequently he did not get the job.

III. ON-THE-JOB ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS

A. Prejudice

Because prejudicial attitudes of one person or group toward another because of age, sex, race, religion, or handicap are pervasive in society, they can cause problems on-the-job. Discriminations in promotions are problems which affect employee morale and career aspirations.

Example: Fred's boss, Archie, who openly admits that he thinks blacks are lazy, refuses to give Fred, who is black, the promotion to a more challenging job.

B. Communication

A worker must learn the jargon (special language) of his job so that he may understand instructions and be able to discuss his work clearly with his co-workers. If a worker cannot express his thoughts, ask questions about instructions, and describe his problems, he may not be able to resolve his problem.

Example: Louise uses slang in the office. Her co-workers and the customers cannot always understand her.

C. Automation and Changing Technology

Job technology is not fixed. New products and machines are constantly being introduced, and work procedures are always being modified. While job skills are important assets, equally important is the ability to adapt to change, to be able to update old skills to fit new situations.

Example: Frank has worked at his job for ten years. Recently, a machine was built to do Frank's job, and Frank, who failed to learn how to operate the machine, was laid off.

D. New Roles

The person entering the job market is leaving behind the school environment and embarking on a full-time career of workers' responsibilities and obligations. Peer group relations become more important because of the new emphasis on cooperative work effort. The loyalty expected by the company from its workers is very different from the old school pride; and the worker's concentrated dependence upon the company for income, status, and lifetime security, is a change from his role as a student, when he looked to many different sources (e.g., parents, school, student clubs) for the different kinds of support. Paying taxes, providing for a family, and buying a house are among the new obligations associated with the role of worker.

Example: Bob hates his work, but he has many financial obligations, and so he works for the money. He never knows whether he should quit or continue to just hang on.

E. Work Rules and Standards

Nearly all companies have written or unwritten codes that describe company policy about the proper way to perform work tasks. These rules and standards are often necessary and are based on wise safety and management factors; sometimes they seem foolish and unnecessary imposition of authority. In either case, they may be annoying to the worker who may attempt to violate these codes and thereby cause serious problems.

Example: Jack likes to smoke on the job. However, the smoke irritates Jack's co-workers in the small office, and the ashes and butts are a fire hazard.

F. Work Habits

The category involves the manner in which a worker performs his job tasks. It includes organizing work efficiently, being neat, being punctual, and caring for equipment and materials. A careless worker can cause problems for himself and for others who have to work with him.

Example: Phil doesn't keep his work in order and so he can't find anything when he wants it.

G. Alienation

A worker may feel powerless or lost in a large organization where he is only a little cog. He may be unwilling to accept the rules of society regarding work and "correct work attitudes." This may lead to the worker seeing himself as isolated and without power in a meaningless job.

Example: John respects art, philosophy, and science. He doesn't see how his repetitious job on the assembly line in a big company can be of any value to society. He feels frustrated and alienated.

H. Getting Along with the Boss and Other Workers

Social relations with colleagues on the job are important because these relations affect how smoothly the group works together and how efficiently the tasks are accomplished. Besides getting along with co-workers, an employee must be able to take instructions from supervisors without feeling offended and pass instructions on to subordinates without offending them.

Example: Judy's boss always checks up on her. This makes her very nervous.

IV. OFF-THE-JOB ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS

A. Family and Personal Situational Adjustment

Personal problems, home life, and other social relations off the job may cause problems on the job or inflate those problems which already exist on the job. The reverse is also true, problems on the job can affect the worker's personal life off the job.

Example: Betty's mother has been very sick lately, causing Betty to miss many days of work.

B. Attitudes and Values

This catch-all category includes factors affecting work attitudes, such as maturity, sense of responsibility, and personality. It also includes the ways in which the employee's values affect his relations with co-workers and management and his perception of work within his philosophy of life. Problems may arise when attitudes and values are in conflict with the employers or with those of co-workers.

Example: Sue has become careless about her work because she has not been given the degree of responsibility on her job that she thinks she deserves.

C. Self-Image

This concerns how we perceive ourselves. If we have a low opinion of ourselves (low self-esteem), we tend to over-criticize our mistakes and underestimate our abilities. This may make us less effective workers, reluctant to take on new responsibilities and constantly afraid of losing our present positions. Conversely, over confidence can lead to too high a self-regard (high self-esteem), which is not supported by our real abilities, and we may "bite off more than we can chew."

Example: Willy decided to take a job as a low-paying laborer, even though he is a qualified carpenter, because he fears failure.

THE PARTS OF THE PROBLEM

LECTURETTE

We have talked about the importance and value of diagnosing job-related problems and we have explored the many and varied types of job adjustment and work entry problems which can develop when you leave school and begin working. At this time, we will begin to delve more deeply into these problems. There are two factors which, combined, produce job adjustment problems: causes and symptoms. A cause is defined as something that produces an effect. A symptom is defined as a sign that indicates the existence of a problematic situation.

For example, if you go to a doctor when you are very sick, you usually tell him/her what symptoms or signs of sickness you have, such as fever, nausea, headache, and so forth. From this information, as well as from tests and his/her medical experience, the doctor will make a diagnosis as to what may be the causes which have produced the effect of sickness.

In order to determine whether something is a symptom, ask yourself the question "Does the worker show signs of a problem, and is this one of the signs?" If you can answer "yes" to this question, you have identified a symptom. In order to determine whether something is a cause, try asking yourself this question "Did this produce an effect?" If you can answer "yes" to this question, you have identified a cause. In the example of Pat and Bobby in

the previous exercise, Pat was able to correctly define the causes and symptoms, diagnose the problem, and solve it while Bobby failed even to recognize the causes and symptoms of the problem.

In the group exercises which follow, keep in mind that you must answer the questions based only on the information contained in the examples and assume that these are the only elements of information involved in the problem. This doesn't happen in real-life situations but our intent is to familiarize you with the general process so you can deal with any problems that come along. AVOID READING ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR ELEMENTS INTO THE PROBLEM.

Symptoms will not always be connected with causes, but usually there is a connection based on the information given in the story.

Just as problems fit together into different categories, so do causes and symptoms. The categories of causes are the same as the Work Entry and Job Adjustment Problems (WEJAP) categories in the Introduction. Let's now take some time to look at the categories of symptoms and some examples of each.

In real-life situations, four things can happen: (1) some parts of the problem can be both symptoms and causes at the same time, and we will label these "both"; (2) there can be causes not connected to each other which produce the same symptom(s); (3) there can be more than one symptom produced by some cause; and (4) there can be irrelevant information which is neither cause nor symptom and has nothing to do with the problem. If there are multiple causes or multiple symptoms (in our examples), don't let that bother you—that's usually the case in real life; if something is both cause and symptom, it simply becomes a link in the chain of causes and symptoms. Finally, use the two questions on causes and symptoms to help you sort it all out.

We have worked through one basic example on pages 45-47 with you; now we would like to have you try one on your own, with the help of the other members of your group. Good luck!

CATEGORIES OF SYMPTOMS

DEFINITION: A symptom is the sign produced by a job adjustment problem.

1. SOMATIC SYMPTOMS (THESE ARE PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS RELATING TO OR AFFECTING THE BODY) - Examples:

   a. headaches

   b. stomach cramps and nausea

   c. bodily tension

   d. backaches

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS (THESE ARE EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS AFFECTING THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER) - Examples:

   a. anxiety

   b. anger

   c. fear

   d. lack of trust

3. PERFORMANCE SYMPTOMS (THESE ARE SYMPTOMS RELATING TO A WORKER'S ABILITY TO CARRY OUT OR ACCOMPLISH WORK) - Examples:

   a. disorganization

   b. carelessness

   c. sloppiness

   d. absenteeism

   e. inability to meet deadlines

   f. tardiness

4. SELF-CONCEPT SYMPTOMS (THESE ARE SYMPTOMS RELATING TO A WORKER'S VIEW OR DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF) - Examples:

   a. fear of failure

   b. lack of confidence

   c. feeling of inadequacy

5. ON-THE-JOB PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SYMPTOMS (THESE ARE SYMPTOMS RELATING TO A WORKER'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG WITH CO-WORKERS) - Examples:

   a. short temper

   b. tendency to start arguments

   c. unfriendly attitude

   d. ignoring instructions

   e. failure to communicate

   f. lack of cooperation

6. OFF-THE-JOB PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SYMPTOMS (THESE ARE SYMPTOMS RELATING TO A WORKER'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG WITH PERSONS OUTSIDE OF WORK, e.g., WIFE, MOTHER, etc.) - Examples:

   a. short temper

   b. lack of time for social activities

   c. lack of time to spend with one's children

ROLE-PLAYING SITUATION

Kim is a young draftsperson at Builders' Associates. Kim's boss has been standing around the desk a lot lately and watching him/her. Kim feels that it is strange since the boss has never behaved like this before. As a result, Kim is very nervous in his/her work and realizes that his/her nervousness might represent a symptom of a job problem. Kim needs to know whether there is some cause for the boss' behavior in order to determine whether he/she actually has a job problem or has merely misinterpreted the boss' behavior.

In order to clarify this situation, Kim could talk to the boss or perhaps his/her co-workers. The boss, however, is out of the office for the rest of the day, and Kim is so worried that even working becomes difficult until he/she knows why the boss is acting this way.

The following sources of information are now available to Kim:

Allan — a young draftsman

Linda — a draftswoman

Bob — a senior draftsman

Cindy — the boss' secretary

Jean — a person who works in the company personnel office

LECTURETTE NO. 2

Since we have a list of possible sources Kim can use for problem identification, let us now look at each one in terms of its worth for identifying his/her problem. In other words, what one source can do that the others cannot.

When we are looking at a particular source (be it a person or a place), we can evaluate it from two standpoints: accessibility and value.

(1) Accessibility: For example, you have a problem that needs to be identified and you know that your old school instructor would know the answer, but he is out of town for the rest of the week and you need to have the problem identified in the next day or so. Obviously, this is a good source, but not accessible for your needs.

There are physical and attitudinal aspects of accessibility. We are familiar with the condition that someone is not physically accessible: the boss is out of town, his secretary is out to lunch, the boss' assistant is in conference, and where are you? You are in a jam, holding the bag, because you need information now and cannot get it.

But what about attitudinal accessibility? You may know whom to ask and what to ask that person, but you do not do it because you feel uncomfortable about approaching him/her. You are are afraid to ask the boss, you do not want to start anything with one of your colleagues, or give the group something to gossip about. You may not ask a colleague for help because that person is from a different social group, and you do not think that he or she can understand your problems. You may not go to the union representative because you do not want to get involved with controversial matter. You may avoid asking the boss' secretary about the boss' policies because you do not want to seem sneaky. Thus, some sources of information may be physically accessible, but they may seem psychologically inaccessible because of your own attitude regarding those sources.

(2) Value: How valuable is the information that we can get from a particular source? A co-worker may have some information for your problem, but the boss may be able to give you more valuable information about it if he is closer to the problem. We should try to go to the best source that can give us the most valuable information. The value of the information is determined by its accuracy and utility. We need information that is accurate because false information may lead us astray and confuse the problem rather than clarify it. Information must also be useful for our purposes. It will be of no use to find out that your job is in jeopardy unless you also find out why. Thus, the value of the source depends on how correct and useful the information is.

Let us look back at the case of Kim and his/her problem with the boss. We have listed several additional sources which Kim could consider other than the co-workers from whom he/she gathered information during the role-playing exercise. Now, we must evaluate the worth of each of these sources in terms of value and accessibility in order to determine which ones would be the best sources for Kim to use in diagnosing his/her problem. For this evaluation, we will use an Information Sources Rating Scale (show transparency).

LECTURETTE NO. 3

Now that we have identified some information sources for problem identification, we see that it is not only important to have information, but it is also important to know that different sources can do different things for different people, and different sources can have different values for different people. For example, look at the situation of Kim and the boss.

In order to help Kim understand the boss' behavior, the best source of information would be the boss. If Kim could have talked to the boss, the information that he/she received would have had a different value than the opinions received from the co-workers. For example, Kim could have stopped gathering information after talking with the boss and probably would have had a better understanding of all the different elements involved in the problem. Also he/she would not have had to consider whether the information received was valid or not.

Other considerations one should consider or possible reasons for selecting information sources follow:

1. Attitude: Both yours and that of the information source. You may not like your co-worker or he/she may not like or get along with you, and this attitude could affect the information given, or the way it is received.
2. Peer Pressure: You may not want to get information from one of the older co-workers or bosses because of what your friends may say.
3. The Ability to Communicate with Someone: Thinking that you are not educated enough, you are unwilling to talk to the "big man."
4. Rejection: You are afraid to ask questions for fear of being rejected.
5. Perception of Roles (how you see it): You don't want to ask the stock boy any questions because you do not think he is high enough in the chain of command and, therefore, you do not believe he knows what he is talking about.
6. Trust and Politics: You are uncertain who will tell you the truth and who will gain from giving you certain information.

CASE STUDY: MARY MARTIN

Mary is a new employee who has recently graduated from high school and this is her first job. Mary has been working with this company for about a month and a half and has recently heard rumors about a possible layoff. Mary has been talking to a number of her co-workers and has heard the old rumor about "last hired, first fired" and this has disturbed her a great deal. She has also read in the newspaper that a number of similar companies have been laying off a number of their workers. She is worried about all of this because she is planning to buy a new car and some other expensive items. Obviously, she is somewhat concerned and upset because of the rumors and the possibility of being laid off.

Recently she had a discussion with her floor supervisor but nothing concrete was revealed. The following weekend she overheard her next-door neighbor, who works in a different department of the same company, discussing with her husband the possibility of her being laid off. At any rate, Mary went ahead and decided to look at a new car. While she was talking to the salesperson, she happened to mention the possibility of being laid off. The salesperson told her not to worry about these kinds of rumors because you hear them all the time.

Next Monday, Mary went to her company's credit union to apply for a loan to buy her new car. When she explained her concern with the possibility of a layoff to the secretary, the secretary suggested that Mary go to Ed Armstrong in the personnel office. By now, Mary had considered going to the district manager's office located downtown, but due to her working hours, she could not get downtown before the main office closed.

Obviously Mary is quite preoccupied with her concerns and needs some help. Putting yourself in Mary's place, what would you do?

OUTLINE

(Step I of the Five-Step Problem Solving Approach)

Steps:

1. DIAGNOSING THE PROBLEM
2. Generating Solutions
3. Evaluating Solutions
4. Choosing Solutions
5. Testing the Solution

We have now worked through all the important parts (sub-steps) of DIAGNOSING THE PROBLEM. The parts of sub-parts included —

Part (A): to generate a list and describe some problems commonly known as job adjustment problems encountered in the transition from school to work;

Part (B): to detect situation or events that show job adjustment problems developing or developed, to assure proper problem diagnosis;

Part (C): to identify the causes and symptoms of a job adjustment problem to assure proper problem diagnosis; and

Part (D): to seek the proper kind and amount of information for further problem identification.

All of these parts (sub-steps) are used to help you properly diagnose any job adjustment problems. Now that you have properly diagnosed what the problem is you will move on to step 2 of the five-step approach.

"LIKE IT OR NOT, HERE IT IS!"

1. You are a newly hired clerk in a department store. You have a headache, but it is time for your half hour lunch break so things should work out. Three customers approach you at the same time; two of them seem to be in a hurry. Your cash register has not been working properly. You have your salesbook, pad, pencil, and telephone to use. How would you handle the situation?

NOTE: The basic problem here is to decide what to do about the customers, using the information you have in the story as well as any other material you feel important in solving the problem. The job adjustment problem in the story involves both new roles as well as prior work experience. Other categories may also apply but these are the two principle categories.

2. You have been in the secretarial pool of the Brown and Williams Corporation for the past nine months. During this time you have been assigned to a number of executives for brief periods of time and your shorthand and typing ability have become very well known. More and more frequently the higher level private secretaries and executives ask for you by name. Finally, you are assigned to two offices and can be buzzed from either office. Unfortunately, you cannot contact the offices so all communications go only one way. Nevertheless, you do your job very efficiently and are happy with your work. Just after you begin your second year with the company you learn you will be promoted to become a private secretary to Mr. Barnes, one of the most active executives in the company. In this position, you will have the opportunity to meet the many people who see Mr. Barnes each day. You will answer the telephone and have two-way communication with your supervisor.

   The third day of your new job produces a variety of problems. A "Mr. Jones" calls for your boss (at least that is what you think he said his name was) and you put him through just as a young man walks into your office and momentarily distracts you. Unfortunately, "Mr. Jones" was actually "Mr. Johnson" whom your boss was trying to avoid. Mr. Barnes becomes very upset and tells you about it over the intercom, warning you that you had better screen incoming calls more thoroughly in the future. You then remember the impatient young man waiting to see Mr. Barnes, but you cannot remember his name and whether you even asked him his purpose for seeing Mr. Barnes. What can you do to avoid these situations in the future?

NOTE: There are two problems here. The first one is a lack of experience in handling communications from someone else to your boss and from your boss to other people (two-way communication). The second problem is your lack of organization. The first obviously involves the job adjustment category of communication while the second involves work habits.

3. You are a gas station attendant and the only person on duty when a customer drives in and tells you his car continually stalls whenever he comes to a complete stop. He says he was just barely able to make it to your station before the car seemed to quit entirely. You know how to start working on his problem but when you go to the tool box, you find it locked. Your boss has the key, but he is out of town. There is another station across the street but the customer does not like to do business with that company. As you are trying to decide what to do, three more cars pull in to get gas. What happens now?

NOTE: The problem here is one of time. The mechanical work must be attended to as well as service to the other customers. The problem categories here are work habits as well as work rules and standards.

4. You have been working as a nurse's aide at General Hospital for about a year and have been quite happy with your job. Your immediate supervisor, Mrs. Vermillion, has been pleased with your conscientious attitude but a little disappointed with your increasingly frequent absences.

   Your nine-year old son gets home from school about 3:30 in the afternoon just about the same time you must be at the hospital. Occasionally, your son has been picked up for loitering and returned home by the police. You work until 11:30 p.m. and must continue your employment in order to support yourself and your son. You are afraid of trouble with the juvenile authorities, are concerned for the boy's welfare, and are worred about your own absenteeism. What can you do?

NOTE: The problem here is situational. The scheduling of your hours to allow you to do an adequate job as well as supervising your son's activities is most important. The problem categories involved here are attitudes and values, work habits, work rules and standards, and family and personal situational adjustment.

OUTLINE

(Step 2 of the Five-Step Problem Solving Approach)

STEPS:

1. Diagnosing the Problem
2. GENERATING SOLUTIONS
3. Evaluating Solutions
4. Choosing Solutions
5. Testing the Solution

You have now worked through the two important phases of GENERATING SOLUTIONS:

Part (A): generating an extensive number of alternative solutions to a work entry or job adjustment problem; and

Part (B): establishing goals for the most desirable solution to a job adjustment problem.

LECTURETTE

EVALUATING SOLUTIONS

In the next exercise, you will be evaluating and choosing solutions for a given problem. You will receive a case study and three possible solutions for solving the problem presented in the case study. A number of information sources have been placed around the room. At each station you will be able to choose certain pieces of paper containing information. Some information will apply to your problem and your solutions, and some will not. Your group is to read your problem thoroughly and decide upon the sources of information that may be helpful in evaluating your three solutions. Using the blank lines between each solution, list the possible "sources," assign group members to various stations. After reading the information, the members will return to the group. Decide which information is important, and return to the group with that information (you may take the paper containing the information back to the group). Keep in mind that some information will apply to your problem and some will not. You must select and evaluate the information to the best of your ability.

When you have returned to your group, you will evaluate together each solution using the information obtained from the sources and will then rank your first, second, and third choices in terms of workability and usefulness. Record your ratings on the Workability and Usefulness Rating Scale (WURS) that each of you has. In other words, now that you have generated a number of solutions for the problem, we want you to evaluate the worth of each solution. Each solution should be considered seriously regardless of how silly it may sound.

In a real situation, after you have generated a number of possible solutions for a particular problem, you will usually find that, simply by stopping to consider them, you will be able to eliminate just about all of the useless ones while retaining two or three that may be the most workable and useful for you. It is with these two or three solutions that you will begin evaluation in a formal or systematic way.

As you no doubt have noticed, two new terms have been introduced that are quite important when considering the evaluation of solutions. The first term is workability. With your situation and and your personality, is it possible for you to carry out the particular solution? Some questions may help you determine workability: Do my work environment and emotional makeup allow me to do what the solution calls for? Do I have the time? Will the people involved cooperate? Will I need any money? Will the solution involve transportation? Is there transportation available? Am I the type of person who can carry out the solution?

The other thing to consider when evaluating a solution is usefulness. Here, you may want to ask yourself: How useful will this solution be for correcting my problem? Will the solution solve the whole problem? Will it only partially solve the problem, only temporarily keeping the problem from becoming worse, for me or someone else?

You will want to pick the solution that best meets the goals you have set up for changing the situation. You will be faced with a lot of different kinds of problems both on and off the job, but the solutions you choose to correct these problems can all be evaluated by considering these two terms: the workability of the solution, and the usefulness of the solution for solving your problem.

To review, here is what we want you to do:

1. While in your group, decide which information station it may be important to go to.
2. Go to the various information stations around the room.
3. Collect any and all information you feel may apply to your three solutions.
4. Return to your group.
5. Evaluate your solutions in terms of workability and usefulness for correcting this problem.

Remember, everyone in your group has good ideas; therefore, do not simply take a vote on how to rank solutions but try to reach an agreement on ranking them. You will be much further ahead if you attempt to reach a consensus (agreement) on all of your choices. Good hunting!

CASE STUDY NO. 1: KURT ADAMS

Kurt Adams has been with Apex Industries for the last seven months in a very good position. Just recently, he was transferred to the Atlanta district office as head of the marketing and retailing division. Although Kurt has good plans for increasing the efficiency and productivity of his department there, he is beginning to feel uncomfortable in his position. His problem is caused by a lack of communication with all his staff members except his senior supervisor from whom he has received complete cooperation. In order not to offend or alienate the workers in his department, he has hesitated to try the new approaches and better methods of organization he feels are needed.

CASE STUDY NO. 2: JOE CHAMBERLAIN

Joe has had his job in a bakery for eight or nine years. His duties there are to prepare the final phase of the baking process and to make sure the ovens are in good working order. Although he has done well in his job, he is faced with an overwhelming problem.

His 13-year-old son has been having some sort of trouble at school, and during the past three months Joe has been called to the phone periodically concerning the boy's unruly behavior. On occasion, it has even been necessary for Joe to leave his job and go to the school to get his son. Obviously, this matter has created trouble at work as well as with his wife and the school. Joe is a concerned individual, worried both about his job and his child's education. He feels the school and the teaching staff are good but he is unable to understand the problem his son has been having.

Joe's supervisor is understanding about the situation and believes Joe has a legitimate reason for being away from his job. However, he realizes that when Joe leaves, a large part of the operation stops. Lately, Joe has noticed that his supervisor seems dissatisfied with him. He would like to correct the situation at work and at his son's school. What should he do?

OUTLINE

(Steps III & IV of Five-Step Problem Solving Approach)

STEPS:

1. Diagnosing the Problem
2. Generating Solutions
3. EVALUATING SOLUTIONS
4. CHOOSING SOLUTIONS
5. Testing the Solutions

You have now worked through three important aspects of EVALUATING AND CHOOSING SOLUTIONS:

Part (A): recognizing the information and sources needed to implement a given solution to a job adjustment problem

Part (B): evaluating information and sources in terms of workability and usefulness for solving a job adjustment problem

Part (C): choosing the most workable and useful solution for solving a job adjustment problem.

VALIDATING LECTURETTE

In the previous exercises, you have been shown how a problem can be diagnosed. Also, you have considered a range of possible solutions, established goals for a successful solution, evaluated your solutions, and chosen one. Now, we want you to think about what happens if your solution fails. If your solution has not worked, your problem is still a problem.

If, in trying out your solution, some of the symptoms disappear, the solution may have been partially successful. However, the solution may not have eliminated the cause of the problem. To determine whether a solution has succeeded or failed, you must compare the goals you established in Step II with the results of the solution to see whether your goals have been met.

For example, if Jeanette's work area is too cold and she wants the temperature raised 5°, a 5°-temperature rise will be her goal and it will not be reached until the room temperature goes up exactly 5°. If the temperature goes up only 3°, her problem will be only partially solved. She may decide to accept this partial solution and wear a warmer sweater or she may attempt an alternative solution in order to reach her goal. In other words validation is the act of comparing the results produced by a solution with the results desired after the problem was diagnosed.

Another approach is to examine the causes and symptoms of the problem identified in diagnosing the problem. Suppose in Jeanette's case that the cause of the problem is a company policy to keep the temperature at 66°, and her symptoms are sniffling and shivering. She may decide that the appropriate goal for her is not to raise the office temperature, but to stop sniffling and shivering. In this instance, the cause of the problem is company policy and may be beyond her control. A successful solution then will not be to change the room temperature but to wear heavier clothing. This will probably reduce the symptoms of her problem, sniffling and shivering, and achieve the criterion Jeanette has set for her solution. To check for the success of a solution in this case, all that is necessary is to see whether the symptoms have been reduced or eliminated and/or the causes corrected.

Later you will find out how to recycle through the five-step problem solving approach if your first solution is unsuccessful. Before you do that, however, try the following exercises to see whether

you understand how to compare the results of solutions with pre-established goals. In each exercise a worker has a problem which he/she attempts to solve. You are given the goals for successful solutions in the first exercise; they are written into the case study. Your task is to compare these goals with the results of the worker's solution and decide whether the solution succeeded or failed. Try to put yourself in the position of the worker and imagine what you would do to validate the solution to the problem. Good luck!

CASE STUDY NO. 1: BERTHA

Bertha sells Fingerfig Soap door-to-door. She has many old, familiar customers with whom she gets along well. Recently, however, the company has put pressure on Bertha to increase her sales to keep up with the other salespeople in the company and in competing companies. Bertha does not like to use the aggressive hard sell approach. She is a meek person who would rather let her customers convince themselves about a product.

Faced with the problem of quickly increasing sales or losing her franchise, Bertha enrolled in a training program hoping to change her character and improve her effectiveness as a saleswoman. The course successfully changed Bertha's character. She is now as aggressive and hardnosed as any of her competitors. She has tripled the number of new customers she usually gets in a month. Unfortunately, she has lost all her old customers and cannot keep her new ones for long. Her net sales are about the same as they were before she enrolled in the program.

Goals

List the goals that a successful solution to this problem should achieve. (You may have fewer than three goals.)

1.

2.

3.

Validation

Was Bertha's solution completely successful according to your goals? _____ (yes or no)

Was Bertha's solution partially successful? _____ (yes or no)

RECYCLING LECTURETTE

When you decide that a solution to your problem has succeeded, then your problem is solved according to your goals and there is nothing more for you to do about the problem. However, if you decide that the solution has failed, then you must not stop here, but must recycle through the problem solving process to find out what went wrong and how to correct the error. You must return to some earlier step in the problem solving sequence and revise that step in order to come up with a solution that will succeed.

You may decide that you selected the wrong solution because you diagnosed the problem incorrectly. Then you will return to Step I to diagnose the problem more carefully. You may decide that your goals for a successful solution were unrealistic, a goal you could never reach. Then you will return to Step II to set new goals for a successful solution. You may decide that you made a mistake in rating and ranking (evaluating) the various solutions or that you did not consider enough solutions. Then you must return to Step II to generate new solutions or return to Step II to recheck your method of comparing solutions.

Therefore, when you compare the results of an attempted solution with your goals and decide that the solution has failed, you must try to find out why it failed, what you did wrong in the problem solving approach. (Refer to Recycling Flowchart on p. 177 of the Student Guide.)

Next you will deal with one case study. In this study, a worker has attempted a solution to a work problem. The results of the worker's solution, however, indicate that the attempted solution has failed. Therefore, the worker must decide what to do next. Your task is to decide to which step in the problem solving approach the worker should return in order to recycle through the approach and determine a more effective solution.

CASE STUDY NO. 2: EVA

Eva lives thirty miles from work. There is no mass transportation between her home and the County Hospital where she works as a dietician. Eva has been driving to work every day, but she gets only twelve miles to the gallon and cannot afford to fill her gas tank three times a week.

Eva has considered hitch-hiking. However, even though she lives in a safe area with a low crime rate, Eva feels that if she hitch-hikes sixty miles every day, her chances of getting into a dangerous situation will be greatly increased. Eva does not want to sell her house and there are no other jobs nearer her home for which Eva is qualified. As a solution to her problem, Eva finally decides to rent her house and take an apartment near the County Hospital.

The family who rent Eva's house do not take good care of it and they are not happy living in Eva's hometown. The family and Eva agree to terminate the lease. Now Eva's house is empty, yielding no income. Nevertheless, Eva must pay the taxes and basic utilities for the house, as well as the rent for her apartment.

One day, Eva learns that two nurses who work at the County Hospital also live in Eva's hometown. The nurses say they have formed a car pool in order to cut their driving expenses in half. They are willing to have Eva join their group. Eva feels she can't do that because of a one-year lease when she signed on renting her apartment. Eva wishes she had considered joining a car pool before deciding to rent the apartment.

Goals

1. Getting to work as inexpensively as possible.

2. Not incurring extra personal expenses because of the job.

Validation

In respect to the above goals, did Eva's solution to her commuting problem succeed?
_____ (yes or no)

Recycling

If you think Eva's solution failed, check the step to which Eva should return in the problem solving approach:

_____ Step I. Diagnosing the Problem.

_____ Step II. Generating Solutions.

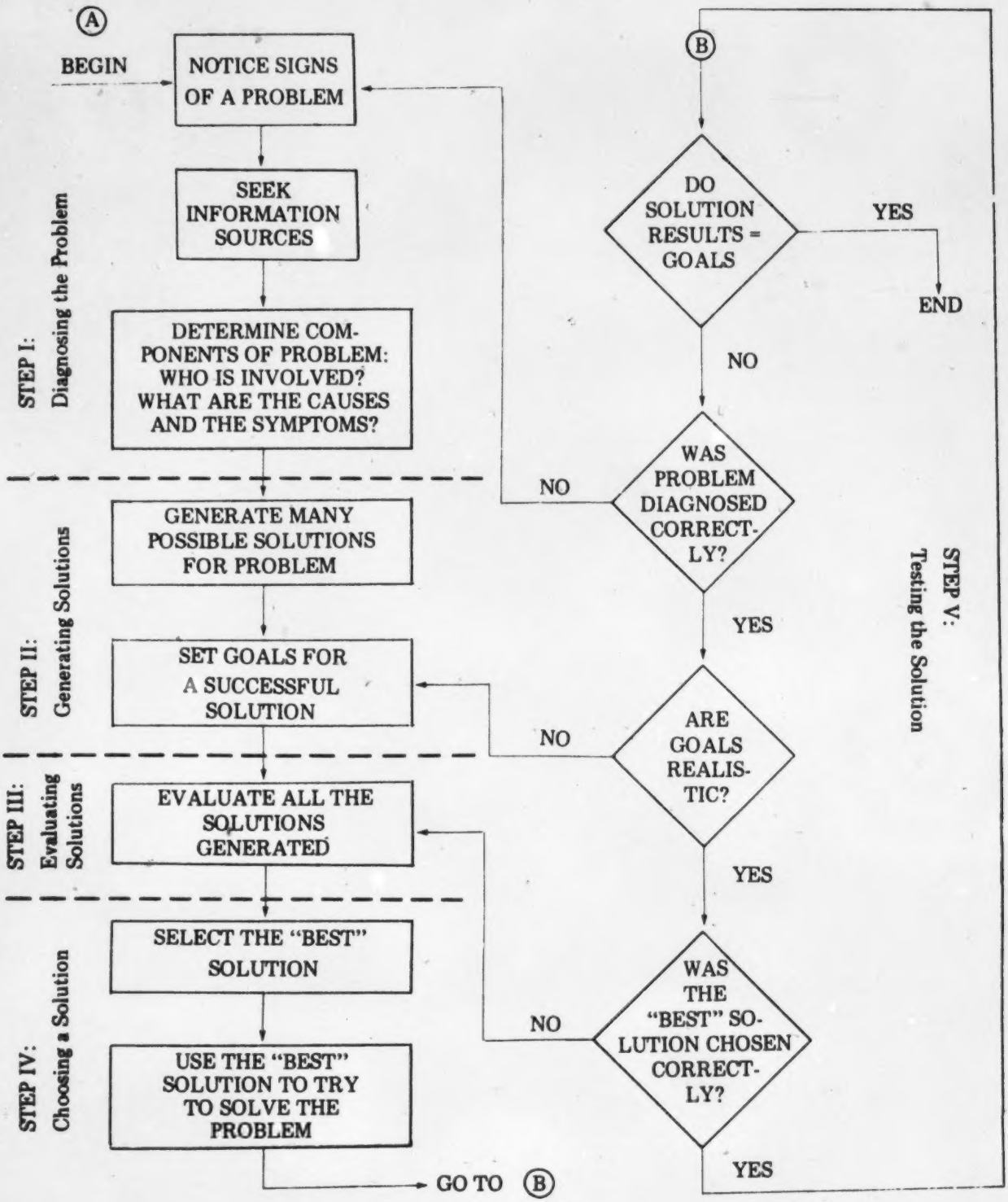
_____ Step II. Establishing Goals.

_____ Steps III & IV. Evaluating and Choosing a Solution.

Explain briefly why you think Eva should return to this step.

STEP V

RECYCLING FLOWCHART



OUTLINE

(Step 5 of Five-Step Problem Solving Approach)

STEPS:

1. Diagnosing the Problem.
2. Generating Solutions.
3. Evaluating Solutions.
4. Choosing a Solution.
5. TESTING THE SOLUTION.

In step 5, the last step of the problem solving approach, VALIDATING THE SOLUTION, you have learned:

1. How to decide whether an attempted solution has succeeded or failed by comparing the results of the solution with the goals for a successful solution.
2. If failure occurs, how to determine which part of the five-step process to recycle to in order to solve the problem.

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STEPS 1 THROUGH 5

LECTURETTE

Complete Review and Application

1. Step 1 involves correctly diagnosing the problem which means that you must identify the problem, look at the chain of causes and symptoms, and seek possible information sources. Why is this so important as the first step in solving a problem?

2. Step 2 involves generating as many possible solutions as you can. What are some things that could limit the number of solutions?

   Example: If you lack adequate training in a specific skill (the problem), there may be only one or two places that offer the necessary training (the solution).

3. Step 3 involves evaluating solutions in which it is necessary to see whether or not the solutions can be carried out and exactly how useful they will be if accomplished. How would you do this on the job?

4. Step 4 involves choosing a solution that is likely to solve the problem. If your first three steps have been done carefully, this fourth step will follow as a direct result of the first three. Sometimes, more than one solution can be chosen. What will help you decide which one to choose?

   Example: Case of implementation, usefulness, accessibility of material necessary to implement the solution, and so forth

5. Step 5 involves testing that the solution(s) you have chosen are adequate to solve the problem. How will you check this out?

   Example: Direct observation, asking friends or co-workers, comparing results with goals, and so forth.

In considering any problem, you can use this approach effectively if you know what each step means. To illustrate what we mean, we would like you to take a look at a case study and see whether you can take a problem through all five steps. We know each of you will approach the problem differently because each of you is a different individual. We think you will agree, however, that the important thing is to solve the problem, and one of the fastest and easiest ways is to use this five-step approach you have been practicing.

CHECKLIST

(Steps 1 through 5)

In solving any given problem remember the following steps:

1. Diagnosing the Problem

   This includes:

   a. identifying the problem or problem area

   b. looking for causes, symptoms

   c. seeking information sources to help define the problem.

2. Generating Solutions

   Try to think of as many solutions as possible.

3. Evaluating Solutions

   Find out which solutions can be carried out and how useful they may be in solving the problem.

4. Choosing a Solution

   Select at least one solution and take action on it.

5. Testing the Solution

   Determining whether the solution has worked.